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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2654  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6587  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3909  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7796  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5040  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2276  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 2376  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3343  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4443  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4917  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 9507  
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
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SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN MILITARY INTERFERES WITH BOLIVIAN PRESS

¶1. (U) At approximately noon February 27, a Venezuelan Hercules that was reported to be carrying disaster assistance arrived in El Alto. When Bolivian journalists attempted to film the Venezuelan crew unloading the cargo, the Venezuelans prohibited them from filming the plane (citing the protections of a "convention" with the GOB), asked for the journalists' film, and briefly detained the journalists on site. The journalists protested and said publicly that they did not deserve to be mistreated by the Venezuelans. They further commented that if the Venezuelans were bringing disaster assistance to Bolivia, they should not have had anything to hide. The footage appeared on the February 27 evening news.

¶2. (U) A high level Bolivian air force official apologized to the journalists later in the day, stating that the Bolivian air force supports and coordinates with the press. He said in this case "we let down our guard," calling the event a "misunderstanding."

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